[Vol. 1.] THE [No. 37.]

WEEKLY VISITANT.

FOR SEPTEMBER 13.

"OURS ARE THE PLANS OF FAIR DELIGHTFUL PEACE,
"UNWARP'D BY PARTY RAGE, TO LIVE LIKE BROTHERS."

SALEM—SATURDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 20, 1806.

ORIGINAL.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

I come
To answer thy best pleasure; be't to fly,
To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
On the curled clouds. SHAKESPEAR.

A prominent feature in our constitution is love of the Marvellous. Man was not destined to unambitious seclusion, or the palsying dungeon of obscurity; he naturally aspires after immortality, burns to mingle sentiment with superior intelligences, and to grasp their expansive conception of mind. The ethereal spirit, which the Creator infused, trembles to reunite with its native element. The mysterious talisman of FANCY, manifesting its influence with unbounded indulgence, diffuses around the loveliest scenes of enchantment, peoples them with invisible myriads, and thus communicates a foretaste of consummated joy.

This wayward propensity is discoverable in the very dawn of intelligence; and, though youth seems its customary season of exertion, continues to operate with many in maturity of years and information. Though its influence appears different on minds differently modified, still all, who inherit the perfect faculties of man, naturally experience its fascinating power. Habititual estrangement however, has sometimes nearly eradicated the principle; but, as its diversities of operation are numerous, it seems disingenuous to determine with presumptuous confidence. Some delight to pursue the wild and wonderous excursions of Romance. This lovely Enchantress presents to view the sweet fields of imagination; or, infusing emotions of painful pleasure, discloses amid the solitude of mountains the gray ruins of a Castle. Here revenge, avarice, jealousy, and fear imprison their victims of innocence. The dread vicissitudes of anguish, suspense, and despair successively prevail. Now a horror-breathing picture petrifies the soul; then a mouldering manuscript is discovered on the blood-besprinkled pavement; now the enormities of the inquisition are minutely developed; while apprehension of momentary murder overwhelms the devoted suf-

ferer, till roused from midnight reveries by the hollow moan of a sheeted apparition. Absorbed in scenes like these, multitudes love to steal from the real miseries of life,

"And with an eager and suspended soul
Woo Terror to delight them."

The beauties of night, affording a grateful contrast to these horrors, are occasionally depictured. The full-orbed moon, partially veiled by fleecy clouds, effuses her mildest beam over hill, valley, grove, woodland, and castle; while in the eastern horizon the ocean heaves in silvery light. At intervals is conveyed to the ear a leafy murmur among the boughs, or the lulling echoes of a remote waterfall. Lifted leaves gleam to the moon. Anon ærial music steals from some embowered recess, swells upon the impassioned soul, and, slowly subsiding, communicates a mysterious extacy.

But descriptive parts, as they only contribute to embellish and perfect the beauty of the story, are of secondary importance. In projecting this, astonishing powers of genius are sometimes displayed; and in the discovery of such intellectual efforts the highest gratification predominates. The originality, which readers may justly expect in the plan of a Romance, completely invalidates the contracted dogma of some critics, who aver that Homer must be esteemed the standard and prototype of all epic poets. Homer's works are preeminent; their innumerable excellencies we acknowledge. But we are not so implicitly attached to the wildwood fragrance of antiquity, as to discover no sweetness in the lily and woodbine of later periods; nor, because the melody of Orpheus suspended the torment of hell, can we listen unmoved to the melodious murmur of the Æolian Lyre.

Another class delight exclusively in grandeur of conception. Anticipating with enthusiasm that exalted advancement, which shall assimilate mankind to immortals, they embrace all opportunities of effecting this amelioration. Superior to the contemptible pursuits of degenerate minds, they proceed with unintermitted resolution toward the accomplishment of their mighty purposes. No dangers intimidate. No difficulties retard their impetuosity. Such characters are eager to commission their minds upon aerial excursions, and to explore the enchanting regions of possibility. However unhappy their situation, however unpromising their prospects, the smiling landscapes of Fancy are ever accessible. Cimmerian shadows may darken around them; but, abandoning the land of obscurity, they visit the lustrous vales of Elysium, and riot amid the luxuriance of purest joy.

This is no illusion. The soul, inheriting a manifest superiority, disdains to be subjected to fortuitous occurrences; and bursting the adamantine chains of fate, seizes with resistless effort the immunities of Liberty. This, however, is the prerogative of resolution; for crowds, that submit to events comparitively unimportant, become voluntary votaries of servitude. Servility of opinion and deficiency of knowledge contribute to produce this deterioration. The man, who has no independence, who implicitly adopts the sentiments of another, is no better than a machine. His movements

proceed not from internal vigor and reflection, but receive from accidental causes an extrinsic impulse. His camelion intellect changes its complexion with every adventitious attrition, and consequently takes with as much readiness the crimson glow of falsehood, as it imbibes the heavenly blue of truth. Pursuing the meteor of indiscriminate prejudice, he ultimately plunges amid the marsh of insignificance.

But to relish in perfection the exquisite gratifications of Fancy seems the prerogative of a cultivated mind. However numerous may be the endowments of nature, education must elicit the latent spark, or it will forever slumber in concealment. Untutored geniuses may view with awe the streaming flame of mutinous clouds, and hear with mingled dread the thunder's concussion; but Science disarms the lightning of its terror, arrests the speed of the glowing bolt, and smiles amid the glory of conflicting elements. Untutored genius may contemplate the firmament with vacant wonder and admiration; but Science loves to plunge amid the empyrean, wheel her course from world to world, revert to earth a glance of nameless exultation, and lose herself in the infinite, immeasurable abyss.

The development of another character may further illustrate the influence of this propensity. The votary, the enamored enthusiast of Nature, repairs alone to a neighboring mountain summit, and there indulges that predilection for rural enjoyment, which constitutes his distinguishing characteristic. An unimaginable charm surrounds these secluded bowers; sunbeams pierce the grateful canopy only to form a mazy shadow; while gales of Eden breathe ambrosial refreshment. The rude dash of ocean faintly fluctuates on the air. From a broken cloud the sun descends upon the deep; he views an emerald islet laved by the encompassing sapphire element. Woods wave beneath him; he treads in thought their billowy surface. As he reclines amid this fairy solitude, the mellow tints of evening slowly fade from view. Indulging anticipations of futurity, accompanied with melancholy musings, he contemplates in a raptured dreaminess of mind these receding glories, while the modulations of a distant organ intermingle an oblivious emotion.

Overcome by enchantment, he imperceptibly falls into a sweet, visionary slumber. Hours elapse ere he awakes. Meantime the clouds, which at nightfall were suffused with glowing hues of heaven, invelope both vale and mountain in gloom, and begin to descend in rain. The shower increases, and, as he hears the raindrops heavily strike the leaves, a gleam of lightning suddenly illumes his way. It is a scene to fill a soul of enthusiasm. Now heaven seems folded in durable fire, now a flaming sword burns amid the embattled clouds, and, as darkness instantly ensues, thunder roars around the mountain-cliffs. While he views the heaving ocean wrapt in flame, he hears with agonizing sympathy the signal-gun of suffering mariners.

And what, interrogates the infidel smile of Apathy; what advantage accrues from the pictures of imagination, and the romantic adventures you have enumerated? Are they not incompatible with the generality of our pursuits? Do they not produce a factitious,

theoretic sensibility, which incapacitates us for the indispensable avocations of life?

An unbounded field of enjoyment is unfolded to the intelligent visionary. The accumulated information of years contribute to blameless amusement. If Fancy but wave her magic wand, ten thousand lovely images start into life. With every meadow, woodland, or mountain are associated recollected scenes. On these green lowlands Leonidas with his devoted com-patriots fell in the fight of freedom. These groves, when moonlight imprints moving figures on the green-sward, are frequented by fairy elves, that gambol beneath the mild influence of night. Among those hoar cliffs and highlands dwelt the heroes of other days. Their harps resounded the wild note of mountain Liberty. Borne on a stream of flame, or invisibly fluctuating on the breeze, or half-viewless amid the pale mist of heaven, their forms descend to catch the sweet murmur of their immortality. On this moss-covered stone the melancholy Bard poured the sorrows of his soul.—"There is a murmur in the heath; the stormy winds abate. I hear the voice of Fingal. 'Come, Ossian, come away,' he says, 'come fly with thy fathers on clouds.' I come, I come, thou king of men. Beside the stone of Morven I shall fall asleep. The people are like the waves of ocean. Like leaves they pass away in the rustling blast. Fingal himself departed. The halls of his fathers forgot his steps. Shalt thou then remain, thou aged Bard, when the mighty have failed? But my fame shall remain and grow like the oak of Morven, which lifts its broad head to the storm, and rejoices in the course of the wind." The days of primeval simplicity come over the soul, and emphatically awaken the "joy of grief."

These intellectual indulgences are not only compatible with the humblest pursuits, but they intermingle with them an ineffable charm. They communicate a delicacy of sentiment and conception, in which the human character is too frequently deficient. They elevate and liberalize the soul. What genuine Poet or romantic Visionary was ever a dishonest man? These are infinitely superior to that mental meanness which invariably characterizes the contemptible Curmudgeon.

Virtue has its boundary; and these pleasures if immoderately pursued, tend to emasculate the energies of the mind; but, indulged with discretion, they give a tone, a vigor, an elasticity to the soul, which it cannot otherwise attain. By consequence care must be employed, lest they imperceptibly engross a disproportionate regard, and thus counteract their own purposes. They must be participated with discrimination, as they are merely incidental, and suited to afford elegant relaxation for moments of leisure. A theatre is a source of instruction and rational amusement; but too frequent attendance and injudicious performances diminish the beneficial effect. Whatever contributes to alleviate misery, or to augment and diversify enjoyment should be ardently embraced. That persons engaged in lucrative pursuits, should principally devote themselves to their respective employments is undeniable; still those, who cherish an inherent predilection for these ambrosial repasts, will discover nu-

merous opportunities of gratifying the noble propensity. But these purest illusions must be neither too frequent nor of too long continuance. The mental vision cannot repose on the rainbow hues of imagination; it instinctively wanders to mellower, softer views, and finally fixes on the refreshing green of nature. The Enchanted Paradise of Aloadin enraptured the unsuspecting Thalaba; but, wearied at length with endless beauty, he lamented the humbler joys of Home.

"He plunged amid the forest solitude.
Deserts of Araby!
His soul returned to you."

But what shall we say of him, who possesses not the smallest particle of fancy, and who is consequently insusceptible of the charms of eloquence, poetry, fiction and nature? What is he? A walking statue, a body destitute of soul. Such a man would hang his father, or betray his country to servitude. His countenance exhibits his soul. It neither glows with intelligence, nor diffuses the seraph beam of extacy; but discloses the remorseless tincture of his mind. No smile of benevolence sparkles in his eye, for the demon of malignity exclusively inhabits there. To him the world of beauty is a blank; to him the endearments of love or the kindlier sympathies of compassion are equally unknown; these godlike feelings are not disgraced by such a possessor. He is inveloped in a night of moveless obscurity.

Fancy unfolds a lovelier view; nor will we neglect to embrace the dayspring of opportunity. Why should we wander in the purlieus of darkness, when the beaming dawn discloses our way? Why should we perpetually grovel on earth, when the emancipated soul may wing the blue immensity of Heaven?

July 29, 1806. A VISIONARY.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

THE RANGER. No. II.

MR. EDITOR,

Having never learned nicely to discriminate between first causes and effects, I do not pretend to account for my being impelled to occasionally send you communications which *maugre* reason, and set at defiance common sense. I say impelled, because the unaccountable wish of seeing my own observations in print, counterbalances the efforts of my better judgment to suppress them. In my first number, I gave you the outlines of my plan of conduct which I intend to pursue; premising, however, that I shall as fancy may dictate, make occasional digressions, and launch out into the wide ocean of general observation, and unqualified research.

The Ranger is not one of those Casuists who dip deep into things, and in meditating,

"Grow still paler by the midnight lamps;"

he is frequently content to "skim the surface," and know the *fact*, without understanding the *reason*. This superficial observation is often in consent with his feelings, and is better suited to the genius of a Ranger, than to profound meditation, and deep research.

The light gleanings of a newspaper are read with avidity; and a feast from

the Port Folio has afforded a finer mental repast than the stale morality and dull pages of Hervey, that *skilful chemist*, who could analyze the trees of the forest and flowers of the garden, squeeze morality from a carrot, and hold the whole vegetable kingdom in requisition to be dealt out at pleasure in the form of rhapsodies.

Far be it from me to reflect upon the piety of Hervey, which I hope was unaffected; bnt his style is a fit objeet for observation, not to say ridicule. I am well aware that the works of nature are a fit subject for contemplation, and for the truly devout and rational mind to

"Look through nature up to nature's God,"

must at all times afford a gratification peculiar to the rationally devout, and unaffectedly pious.

The brilliant flashes of wit,

"Brief as the lightning in the collied night,"

which we find in Sterne, though interspersed with *rubbish*, and blended with allusions which degrade him as an author, sparkle as the diamond, and while we pass over his crudities, we are ready to exclaim, "Alas, poor Yorick!"

I hope none of my readers will accuse me of being frivolous, and pleased with "trifles light as air;" the Ranger disclaims the charge—He is a friend to that polity, which is reared on the firm basis of religion and morality, and though to unbend the mind he may sometimes relax from the rigid rules of austere seriousness, yet to be "wisely careless, innocently gay," is his endeavor.

The Ranger professes to be an admirer of whatever is *pithy*, and sensible, whether it originates with the proud lordling or humble poverty—whether emanating from the superb mansion of wealthy opulence, or from

"Garret high, with cobweb hung"

of the poor poet.

He is equally averse to the *fine spun* speculations of the *minor* Deist, and the fastidious rant of a puritan Enthusiast.

The medium of old-fashioned honesty unmixed with superstition, was religion, instead of the new-fangled philosophy—politeness, instead of Chesterfieldian graces.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

"Learn thou of Nature, and of Nature's God."

The contracted scene of pleasure, dissipation and business, in which the generality of men at this age are immured, and the difficulty of escaping it when once confined, seem absolutely to allure them from the meditation and study of Nature's works; a study which by far exceeds every other mortal enjoyment in delight and usefulness. There is a fixed preference to the restless motion and the giddy whirlpools of a busy life, rather than to the awe-inspiring contemplation of those stupendous luminaries in the heavens, or to the pleasing consideration of the curious minutiæ on "our earth below." And this is principally owing to a mistaken idea, that it is dull and unpleasant.—But ask the secluded inhabitant of the hermitage. Does he, who spends his days and nights in solitary reflection on the objects which surround him, experience unhappiness, except from the intruding remembrance of his actions while in society? The contented peasant of the vale refreshes and rests himself by the study of nature. Here he feels not the painful consequences of

dissipation, or the tedious cares of business. His walk is more delectable on the green grassplot of his shady grove, than on the most magnificent apartment, adorned with the richest carpets, or the superbest curtains. The numerous voices of its feathered inhabitants make for him a concert, not excelled by the most celebrated orchestra. He wants no glaring taper, for the sun sufficiently supplies him with light. And when that bright, glorious orb has sunk beneath the horizon, he lays himself down placidly to rest on his bed of straw, and enjoys the sweetest slumber.

Who will not, when he contemplates seriously this picture, lay aside his wide schemes of speculation; who will not be eager to extricate himself from the labyrinth of dissipation? Alas, how soon do the enticements of false pleasure allure the unwary mind! Hurried along from one transitory object to another, constantly procrastinating a time for consideration, man is pushed into old age unawares, and being wholly employed with regret or misfortune, is then unable to contemplate the wonders of creation.

Washington-Street, Sept. 5, 1806. HIRAX.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

A TOUCH AT THE TIMES;

OR ——'S REVERIES.

Hush! here's a belle, dress'd *a la tip*;
With sideway glance and nimble trip,
She flirts along quite gaily;
Jack, did you ever see the charm
Before to-day? Quoth Jack, quite warm,
"See her! I see her daily!"

Where is she from; from Boston? "No."
From Philadelphia, New-York? "Poh!
"From neither of those places;
"Think you that Boston, New-York, or
"The banks of distant Delaware
"Alone possess the graces?

"Friend, bring your thoughts some nearer home,
"And through the streets of Salem roam,
"And if you're not content
"With the sweet beauties of our fair,
"I'll pay you for your toil and care,
"And for the time mis-spent.

"See! yonder comes Miss Ruthy Mild,
"A beautiful and charming child;
"There's not a flirt or belle,
"Who at the ball can gaily dance
"Or throw your cunning, *sideway glance*,
"Or *ogle* half so well.

"Had you the pow'rs o' th' evil one,
"Yet still I'm sure you'd be undone,
"So tempting are our fair,
"For they outdo the Carthage girls,
"Who for bow-strings cut off their curls,
"And twisted their long hair.

"Diana's self they might defy,
"And equal her in chastity ;
"And e'en when Venus sees them,
"Her angry, envious passions rise,
"And Jove, the father of the skies
"Has much ado t' appease them."

I know, quoth I, because Miss Ruth
Possesses all the charms of youth,
You think that there are many ;
But Jack, I'll tell you what, *between us*,
There is not one so fair as Venus ;—
—I don't know old Diana. OLD QUIZ.

COMMUNICATED.

FRIEND EDITOR,

By inserting the following in thy useful Miscellany, thou wilt much oblige thy friend, and encourage usefulness. F.

NEW PUBLICATION.

We are happy to inform the public, and more especially those of our own Society, that a new publication has made its appearance in the world, entitled the "*Pious Instructor ;*" being a Selection in prose and verse, for the use of Friends' Schools. The author appears to be a warm zealot and advocate for religious truth, and one that improves to the best advantage the talents alotted to his care. His book appears to be studied to impress upon young and susceptible minds the importance of forming good principles whilst young, and the effect of a thorough religious life ; and also the profligate and degenerate state that too many among us have attained to and are approbated therein, and of course the necessity of vigilance to keep in the path of rectitude, and not to be *led away into by-paths* by the powerful effect of example.

The size is good for the use of Schools, and the price cheap. It is hoped that Friends universally will avail themselves of the *Pious Instructor*, as a reading book for the use of their Schools. The author is Daniel Cooledge, of Walpole, N. H. F.

Bolton, Ms. 9th Mo. 4th, 1806.

The Anniversary of the *Salem Female Charitable Society* was held on Wednesday last. At 3 o'clock the Members with their Officers and the Orphans under their care, assembled in the Rev. Dr. Prince's Meeting-House, where, after a Prayer from the Rev. Dr. Barnard, Dr. Prince delivered a well adapted and appropriate discourse, from Prov. xii. 2 "*The rich and the poor meet together, and the Lord is the maker of them all.*" A collection was made amounting to $150.

☞ The Visitant was not issued on Saturday last on account of indisposition. The deficient number shall be made up as soon as convenient.

MARRIED,

In Ipswich, William Dodge, esq. to Miss Lucy Farley. In Danvers, Mr. Aquilla Martin, to Miss Eunice Josselyn. At Hingham, Mr. Thomas C. Cushing, Editor of the *Salem Gazette*, to Miss Rachel Andrews. At Smithfield, Mr John Brown, of this town, to Miss Mary Thornton. In this town, Mr. Isaac Currier, to Miss Betsey Hutson.—Mr. Andrew Smith, to Miss Lucia Mansfield.—Capt. Joseph Winn, to Mrs. Mary Sleuman.—Rev. Jeremiah Noyes, of Gorham, to Miss Lucy Johnson, daughter of the late Rev. Mr. Johnson, of Harvard.

DEATHS.

At Beverly, Asa Leech, esq. aged 75, Post-Master. In this town, Mr. John Teague. Yesterday morning, of consumption, Mrs. Mary Pickman, aged 30, wife of Dr. Thomas Pickman, and daughter of the late Jonathan Harraden, esq. Mr. Joshua Leavitt, aged 48. Mr. Isaac Currier.